

REMARKS

Claims 21-40 are pending in the present application, with claims 21-24 and 36-39 currently under consideration. Claims 28 and 30 have been canceled. Claims 21, 23, 24, 29, 31, 32, and 36-39 have been amended. Claims 21 and 24 are independent claims. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the outstanding rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 27-32, 36, and 37 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 31 and 32 because the term “obtains” should be replaced with “obtain.” Claims 31 and 32 have been amended above according to the Examiner’s suggestion.

The Examiner further objected to claims 36-39 because they depend from method claims, but recite “apparatus” in their preambles. Claims 36-39 have been amended above to replace “apparatus” with “method” in the preambles.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw these claim objections.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 24, 25, 38, and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Zhang et al. (US 2004/0086177). Claims 21, 22, 23, 26, 33, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zhang.

Without conceding the appropriateness of these rejections, Applicants have amended independent claim 21 to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 28 which was indicated by the Examiner to be allowable. Also, independent claim 24 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 30 which was indicated by the Examiner to be allowable. In view of these amendments, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 21 and 24 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, claims 22, 23, 25, 26, 33, 34, 38, and 39 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claims. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw these rejections.

Conclusion

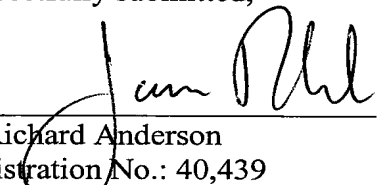
Entry of this Amendment After Final is respectfully requested in that, given the Examiner's previous indication of allowable subject matter, only a cursory review would be required to determine that the above amendments would place the application in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that any outstanding matters remain in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Jason W. Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned to discuss the present application in an effort to expedite prosecution.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By  #47,305
for D. Richard Anderson
Registration No.: 40,439
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant